

REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Throughout the year, the Commission reviews, conducts site inspections and provides comments and recommendations on Alton's Wetland Permit applications to the NH DES Wetlands Bureau. In 2009 we received a total of 134 applications for proposed projects impacting surface waters and/or wetlands in Alton. These applications included 26 Standard Dredge & Fills, 16 Minimum Impact Expedited applications, 15 Permit By Notifications, 41 Shorelands, 33 Dept. Head Reviews and 3 Notification of Routine Roadway and Railway Maintenance Activities. A number of applicants also came before the Commission to present and discuss project proposals and impacts. The revisions and reporting requirements of the Shorelands Protection Act appear to have been well received and understood by those to whom it applies. The Commission conducted site inspections and sent comments with recommendations to the N.H. Wetlands Bureau.

We continue to work closely with the Planning Board regarding environmental impacts of proposed projects. We reviewed many subdivision and site plans, conducted field visits and commented on proposed plans for the Planning Board. We provide annual funding for Lay Lake monitoring of Lake Winnepesaukee, Half Moon Lake and the Merrymeeting River. This monitoring provides data to assess water quality of these important water bodies. Water quality reports for the lakes are available in the Commission Files.

The Commission manages and is responsible for annually monitoring and reporting on 10 Conservation Easements in Alton totaling 258 acres and managing town-owned Conservation land totaling 548 acres. The monitoring performed during 2009 did not identify any significant violations. The Gilman Pond Conservation area and the Alton Town Forest are currently available for public use and include walking trails and parking areas. The Commission is working to improve the trails at the Town Forest and is working with the Forest Society to enhance opportunities for public recreation at the Town Forest and the adjacent Morse Preserve recently acquired by the Forest Society. The Commission worked with the New England Wildflower Society during 2009 to implement a clearing of the forest understory at one Gilman Pond location of the rare *Isotria medeoloides* (small-whorled pogonia) to determine the impact on plant colony development.

We would like to express our special thanks and appreciation to Justine (Brownie) Gengras for her years of service and expertise, we wish her well in her future endeavors. Also we are grateful to the Building/Code Enforcement Secretary, Cindy Calligandes, for taking our minutes, maintaining our records, tracking the Commission's activity on environmental cases and providing coordination with the Planning and Zoning Boards.

Respectfully submitted,

Earl Bagley, Chairman
Eugene Young, Vice-Chairman
Roger Burgess, Treasurer
Thomas Hoopes, Member

E. David Lawrence, Member
Cris Blackstone, Member
Peter Bolster, Selectmen's Liaison